Summaries

Individualization and the youth phase
by Els Peeters, Erwin van Rooijen and Harry Guit

In this article we explore some theoretical notions which interpret the structural changes in the youth phase. The discussion about the transition from a 'standardbiografically' organized life-course (or a 'normal life-course') to a 'choice-biography' is our theoretical starting point. Within this conceptual framework we focus on the thesis of 'the individualised youth biography' which points out that 'youth' is losing it's natural distinction as a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood.

With data from our longitudinal project 'Youth, their parents, and work', we try to explore this empirically by distinguishing several 'passages to adulthood'. We both look at the age at which our respondents (think they will) take these passages and the sequence in which they (expect to) take them. On the basis of these criteria we can construct 'more standardbiographically orientated trajectories' and 'individualised trajectories'. We differentiate these results to gender and class.

Solid rock or quicksand?: The impact of intentions and life course factors on the process of union formation
by Aart C. Liefbroer, Liesbeth Gerritsen and Jenny de Jong Gierveld

In this article the link between union formation intentions and behaviour among steady dating young adults is studied, using data from the Study on Social Integration of Young Adults. The extent to which life course factors influence union formation is examined as well. Among young adults who have a steady dating relationship and who plan to live together within two years, more than 50% realize this intention, wheras among young adults who do not plan to live together within two years less than 10% is living in a union within two years. Life course factors influence union formation both indirectly, by shaping union formation intentions, and conditionally, by influencing the extent to which young adults realize their intentions.

Intergenerational transmission of political party preference in the Netherlands
by Karin Wittebrood

In this article several hypothesis are tested on the relative impact of the political party preference of fathers and mothers on the party preference of their children. To test the hypotheses a data-set of high school seniors is analyzed, representing Dutch pupils from the school of higher general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). One con-

clusion of the article is that there exist a direct impact of the father's and mother's political party preference on the party preference of their children, after controlling for social-economic class and religion. Furthermore, the data show that the political party preference of mothers is more influential on the daughter's preference than the party preference of fathers. However, no differences were found when the influence on sons is analyzed. Another conclusion from the article is that the frequency adolescents discuss politics with their parents does not influence the transmission of political party preference.

Immigrant and indigenous youngsters: is there a difference?
by Peter Cuyvers, Frank von Meijenfeldt, Hajee van Houten and Frans Meijers

The article compares the life-course perspectives and expectancies on adulthood and work of Dutch adolescents with adolescents of the migrant population in the Netherlands, respectively from Surinam, Turkish and Moroccan origins. The research is part of a larger project, aimed at improving the school and job-counseling of migrant children. A number of explanations in the literature for the backward situation of migrant adolescents is not supported by the results. The similarities between Dutch and migrant adolescents seem to be greater than the differences. There also is not much to be found of a 'cultural gap' between migrant adolescents and their parents. The real problem lies elsewhere in the opinion of the authors. They recommend that migrant parents, who suffer from a lack of knowledge on the educational system should be taken serious as partners in the process of counseling.

Productive consumption: the influence of peers and mass culture on identity formation of the unskilled youth
by Laurenz Veendrick

In this study the influence is analysed of the 'unintended' socialisation on the identity formation of unskilled youth. The analysis is concentrated on the following domains of socialisation. First the aspect of hanging around with peers, in which the subculture of the group produces a form of collective identity from which one can derive an individual identity apart from the ascribed identity through class, sex, education or profession. Second the aspect of increasing influence of mass consumption and mass media, which seems to give the youth new possibilities for designing their own lives.

The extension of the youth period has the effect that peers and mass culture brings new possibilities for identification within the reach of the unskilled. The resulting identity formation is mainly youth-directed. In this respect it bears certain characteristics of a modern identity formation, as it lead to more self-consciousness and a stronger sense of individuality. The new identifications, however, have mainly a aesthetical-expressive nature. On the ethical-moral level the traditional contexts of meaning still have importance to them as source of identification. Especially for the unskilled boys. The central place of the image of the male breadwinner in these traditional contexts is not directly unreconcilable with the new achieved self-consciousness. The girls are more ambivalent. The traditional housewife and mother image is more difficult to reconcile with a strong developed individuality.

The cultural configurations of pop music. The four dimensions of youth styles
by Ger Tillekens

Since the fifties there has been a growing cultural diversity of adolescent life styles, organized around the practices of pop music. In this medley of youthful creativity the old bonds

between cultural style – as the expression of taste – and the existing class- and status-hierarchy have disappeared. At least that is the telling conclusion of much recent research on youth styles, which fails to find the traditional opposition between a 'high' and a 'low' culture. This article criticizes these results as an artefact of the often-used method of factor analysis. It exemplifies the shortcomings of this technique empirically with a dataset on musical preferences of youngsters and contrasts the results with the outcomes of other scaling techniques as for instance PRINCALS. The analysis shows that the preferences for musical genres can be ordered along the lines of at least four dimensions. Two of those dimensions coincide strongly with the cultural differences between gender and class. The other two dimensions however, which can be labelled as modernity and youth centrism, can be interpreted as strategies to retrieve a sense of personal identity out of the compelling force of tradition. The vacillating balance between the separate dimensions enforces the interpretation of rock music as an arena for the struggle for new definitions of identity.